



Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants

Public Hearing re: HB 6678

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH LICENSING STATUTES

March 16, 2009

Representative Ritter, Senator Harris, and members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about House Bill 6678. My name is Patrick Killeen, and I have been a physician assistant for 22 years, 18 of which have been in the practice of pediatrics. I am here today to represent the Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants (ConnAPA).

ConnAPA respectfully requests that the Committee consider amending section 15 of this bill, which relates to neonatal and pediatric specialty care transport. We agree that neonatal and pediatric specialty care transports should be accompanied by qualified health care professionals who have the appropriate training and experience in caring for neonatal and/or pediatric patients.

However, Section 15, as currently drafted, is subject to interpretation, and appears to say that only licensed registered nurses can be authorized to support a neonatal or pediatric specialty care transport. We believe that limiting the staffing of these transports to only one profession could potentially limit access to care for our state's most vulnerable patients, and create workforce issues for the neonatal transport system.

Currently, the University of Connecticut Health Center utilizes physician assistants and advanced practice nurses to staff the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the neonatal transport program. Each member of the transport team is certified by the American Academy of Pediatrics' Neonatal Resuscitation Program, and re-certifies every 2 years. There are currently 4 PAs on the transport team, one of whom, at the direction of a supervising physician, has been providing high-level neonatal care for over 15 years.

If section 15 is passed without amendment, PAs and other qualified health care providers could potentially be prohibited from continuing to deliver the high-level care that has characterized UCONN's neonatal transport program for years. Even pediatricians and neonatologists could be excluded, unless section 15 is amended in a way that clarifies that PAs and other qualified health care providers can accompany neonatal and pediatric specialty care patients in transport.

ConnAPA would be happy to provide the Committee with possible language for such an amendment upon request.

Thank you for your attention, and I would be happy to answer any questions that members of the Committee might have.

Respectfully,

Patrick E. Killeen, MS, PA-C